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The considerations of the Brazilian scene to be submitted in this article will be based on the following hypothesis: a civilization can be explained significantly from the structure of the language which informs the thoughts of those who participate in it. The hypothesis itself will not be discussed in what follows.

On the surface Brazil is a Portuguese-speaking society. Portuguese is the language of the Government, the press, the literature, and the vast majority of citizens. Although the country is enormous, the difference between the Portuguese spoken in the extreme north and south is negligible. There are differences between the Brazilian Portuguese, and the language spoken in Portugal, but they are mostly phonetical and lexical, and hardly affect the structure of the language. It can therefore be said, on the surface, that Brazil belongs to the Portuguese culture. Below the surface, this is not so. In the North, very strong Indian elements infiltrate everyday speech and disrupt the "logical" structure of the language. Even in São Paulo, the language spoken by women and children was Tupi-Guarani until the beginning of the 19th century. In Bahia the "liturgical" language of the African religions is a Bantu dialect, and the African religion is the authentic expression of religious feeling of the vast majority of that region. In the city of São Paulo about a third of the population does not speak exclusively Portuguese at home. Italian, Arab, Yiddish, Japanese, and, to a less extent, almost every European language, is the real mother-tongue of that part of the population. Vast regions of the State of São Paulo speak Japanese as their true language. In the State of Paraná Polish can almost be considered as a second language, and as the true mother-tongue of a great part of the population. In the State of Santa Catarina German is important to such an extent that even the Negroes speak it. This is also true of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, but there the situation is complicated by the influence of Spanish. The Portuguese spoken there is closer, in some respects, to the Spanish spoken in Argentina than to the Portuguese spoken in the rest of the country. And the linguistic scene of the country is even more complicated than this short sketch suggests.

It goes without saying that the languages mentioned are of such vastly differing structure that their assimilation to Portuguese is a task of tremendous difficulty. In fact, this task can be considered as the real challenge of a true Brazilian civilization to be created. Of course, Italian or Spanish are relatively easy to be encompassed, but the same is not true of, say, German, Yiddish or Arab. But the true extent of the task can be seen when Japanese, Bantu or Tupi are in question. It is the conviction of this writer that the recent manifestations of Brazilian culture, (including its philosophy), are first authentic attempts to cope with that challenge.

The Portuguese language will be considered in the first place. It is a lat-

1. VILÉM FLUSSER

in language, which means that it is a barbaric corruption of the Roman language, infiltrated by Germanic, Celtic, and (in the case of Portuguese) strong Arabic elements. Latin forms sentences on the "subject-object-predicate" pattern with a strong accent on the subject, viz: "hic leo" where the predicate is suppressed. The corruption makes this pattern more explicit, and shifts the accent on the predicate, viz "aqui está um leão". The Latin structure is thus preserved, in that it divides its discourse in flexible situations, (i.e. "Sachverhalte"). But these "Sachverhalte" are no longer static, as in Latin, but are processes. They are what existential analysis calls "projects", (i.e. "Entwürfe"). Portuguese, (like almost all modern European languages) discloses a reality which consists of situations that are projects. But the ontological analysis to which Portuguese submits this reality differs from most modern European languages, in that it disposes of at least three verbs articulating "being", namely "ser", "estar" and "ficar". This gives reality as disclosed in Portuguese a character completely different from, say, German with its "werden", and Czech with its "stát se".

Portuguese became a literary language in the late Middle Ages, like most European languages, but it declined in the late Renaissance and suffered, unlike most European languages, a second barbarization. In contact with the Brazilian jungle, (namely Indian and later Negro languages), it divided into two levels. One level took refuge to libraries and academies and resulted in an inauthentic language of grammarians, almost completely alienated from conversation. The other level impoverished and lost its structural tightness and became a very poor instrument for refined or precise thought. This is the formal reason for the alienation of Brazilian literature in general, and philosophical literature in particular, during most of its history up to the 20th century, and including even the first twenty years of that era. It became painfully evident, by 1920, that Brazilian thought operated in a vacuum, due to its insignificance for general conversation. I shall take up this situation later in this argument.

All other European languages spoken in Brazil, (except, in part, Yiddish), have the same "subject-object-predicate" structure. That is to say they disclose similar realities to which the kantian forms of perception, ("anschauungsformen") of time and space, and the kantian categories of knowledge can be applied with meaning. But of course, the verb being what it is in, say, Polish, "time" is a form very different from "time" in Portuguese. The special character of Yiddish is accentuated in Arab, which is almost wholly semitic. Although its structure is still "subject-object-predicate", and in this sense their reality is structurally the same as in Portuguese, the "Sachverhalte" are entirely different. The verb consists of combinations of elements, (loosely "letters"), and the distinction of subject and predicate becomes fluid through passages from verbs to substantives. An analysis of

VILÉM FLUSSER
 Arabic thought with kantian methods has very little meaning. The Arabic thought is no kantian "pure reason".

Japanese is Oriental in that it is, in fact, not one language, but two, namely spoken and written. The spoken Japanese is hybrid and combined the isolating and mosaic structure of Chinese with the agglutinative structure of the Polynesian languages. To say that this language disclosed a reality of "Sachverhalte" has no meaning. Our categories cannot be applied to that reality without complete distortion. Our "logic" does not apply to that world. The written Japanese is in part Chinese, namely ideographic, ("Kanji"), and in part syllabic. The syllabic writing is a transcription of the spoken language, but the Kanji writing is almost completely independent on it. It expresses, in fact, a reality which is different from the spoken reality, and far richer. The Japanese think in Kanjis rather than in spoken sounds. Obviously the reality thought of by the Japanese is almost completely impenetrable for Western analysis, be it "aristotelian", be it "neo-positivistic"; Subject, object and predicate, which are the elements of our "Sachverhalte", cannot be applied to that reality with meaning. This explains, for instance, Zen, which to us is a blending of subject and object in the predicate, and it explains Oriental mysticism, so different from Indian and European mysticism with its logical structure.

I shall not now attempt to analyse the structure of the African and aboriginal languages spoken in this country. Suffice it to say that they reveal realities totally different from the one which Portuguese discloses. The fact that logical arguments, (whatever that may mean), is completely lost on Indians or African slaves was very much in evidence to the mind of the Portuguese settlers of the centuries preceding ours. They lived in a reality completely different from ours. What I pretend to show is something else, and for this purpose I return to the crisis of Brazilian thought in the nineteen twenties that I mentioned.

Brazilian thought expressed itself, up to that time, in the academic Portuguese which tried to deny the fact of its transplantation to the new, Brazilian surroundings. This academic language was highly rational and barren, in complete contrast with the general conversation, which was full of contradictions and internal tensions. Now this artificial rationality of the academic Portuguese, in its isolation, tried to find points of contact with thought abroad, and found this contact in French positivism. Positivism was a veritable godsent. It had everything Brazilian intellectuals needed. It was clear, systematic, optimistic, and "Latin". In a word, it was a germanian's "Weltanschauung". In France, of course, it was the result of the spirit of the French language. But now, transplanted to Brazil, it became a monster. It had nothing to do with Brazilian reality as expressed in general conversation. It was without any existential significance in its new sur-

VILÉM FLUSSER

roundings. But it became the general pattern of official Brazilian culture. The State, the Army, the educational system, and the arts were organized according to it. Whilst the Negroes invoked their spirits of rain gods and fertility goddesses, whilst the town people organized processions to worship in Baroque churches, and whilst they thus created the foundations of a Brazilian culture, the intellectuals and officials danced a precious mimette of rationalistic comtian gestures. It is true that these gestures had something comical to them. Positivist temples began to be built all around, and some still exist today to prove that even positivism can be transformed into a kind of vodoo. But the fact still remained that the Portuguese language, in its "pure" state, (i.e. in its positivistic form), was no expression of the reality in which the general conversation proceeded.

It is not my purpose to deny every achievement of this artificial culture. But it was abandoned in the 1920s. It is very symptomatic that the revolution in Brazilian thought, (known as the "week of 1922"), was brought about by writers. In fact, what happened was a linguistic consciencialization. In order to regain contact with reality, the intellectuals had to reformulate their language. It was therefore not the politicians, or the economic leaders, or painters, or composers, or musicians, but it was the poets who revolutionized the Brazilian scene and opened the way for authentic realizations. This revolution is still in the making. Remnants of positivistic thought are still visible everywhere, although they now take the form of erudite academism or marxism, (which has, by the way, very little in common with marxism as Europeans now it). The revolution is still in the making, and it begins to result in a new form of civilization. What it amounts to is, "in muce", an effort to create forms of thought, (and consequently of life), in which the different realities of the various languages spoken here may be synthetized into a new meaning. Thus Brazil is presently the stage of an effort to create a new civilization, Western in essence, but open to other influences, which would give a new meaning and a new dignity to human existence.

I shall give now a few examples of the results of these efforts. I shall begin with poetry, which is the field where this process started. The problem there was how to explode the logical structure of Portuguese and open it to other influences, more especially to the influence of Japanese and the African structures. Of course, the effort to explode the logical structure of European languages is not typically Brazilian, but general. From a formal point of view the Prague school and the Vienna circle are such efforts, and from another point of view Kafka can be thus explained, and so can Joyce, (and Proust, for that matter). The logical structure must be exploded, if we are to free ourselves of the absurd dichotomies to which logic leads us. In other words, we must find new languages in which to seek for a meaning. But in Brazil, this effort takes on a different character, because here we have the Japanese lang-

VILÉM FLUSSEK

uage to provide us with a pattern. The transplantation of ideogrammatic thought into the "Sachverhalt" structure of portuguese results in a superation of discursive thought by adding to it the visual and two-dimensional character of Oriental writing. And the agglutinative character of African (and Tupi) languages, if adapted to Portuguese, disrupts the European form of sentences and opens new forms of expression. The result of this is a new form of literature, exemplified by Guimarães Rosa, (whose books, I understand, are being "translated" into Czech), and a new form of poetry, called "concrete", (which, I understand, is known and adapted by some Czech poets), I do not think that the importance of this development for the future Brazilian culture can be exaggerated.

As a second example I shall choose music. Portuguese, (like almost every European language), tends to two levels of abstraction: the level of the pure symbol, and the level of the pure structure. Thus European thought has two abstract limits: mathematics and music. The pre-socratic Greeks knew that, and they called these two limits in their entirety "logos". Thus music is the articulation of the pure structure of European languages, the "phenomenalized spirit". But this is not true where African languages are concerned. Music in Bantu Africa is the rhythmic invocation of the forces of Nature, something more akin to our technology than to our music. By music man governs Nature, a fact we can still feel if recalling Orphism. Now for us in Brazil this Negro character of music is something we can experience every night by listening to the drums on the hill tops. It is, to us, a meaningful language. No abstract "logos" talks to us through the drums, but concrete reality. The attempt to synthesize this concrete language with the pure and structural compositions of European music is being made on two levels. On the erudite level it results in works like the "Bachianas" of Vila-Lobos, which are, in fact, a synthesis of Bach with the rhythm of the Congo. On the popular level it results in works like the "bossa nova", which are, in fact, a synthesis of white and Negro music without the commercial cheapness of American jazz. I believe that these efforts represent a valid alternative for electronic music, which is, in fact, a confluence of music and mathematics.

As a third example I shall mention briefly painting. In the Orient painting is a branch of calligraphy, and is thus an effort to write more intensely. In fact, Oriental painting is an effort to surpass language, and there is something mystical to it. For the Arabs and for the Jews painting as such is forbidden, but the writing of letters, (the "Arabesque"), substitutes painting and is a sort of prayer. Now this religious character of painting went lost in the West in the Renaissance, when painting became "realistic", i.e. when it started copying the reality disclosed by discursive language. Modern painting, ever since the second half of the 19th century, is the effort to give back to painting its authentic meaning, as an expression of reality indepen-

VILÉM FLUSSER

dent of the spoken language. Pictures tell no longer stories. But here in Brazil we know what painting may really mean in the daily life of the Oriental and of the Semite. We can see it. The challenge is to unite this concrete existential meaning of painting with the structural rigor of Western painting. The result is a richness in form and color, (tropical color), and an appeal to the inarticulate essence of thought, as exhibited in the São Paulo Bienales. It is no accident that some of the most prominent names in Brazilian painting are Japanese, and I give Kanabu Kabe as an example. If I had taken my examples from other fields of civilization, I believe the result would have been the same, namely a demonstration of the fundamental effort of Brazilian intellectuals to open the Portuguese reality up to the realities of the other languages spoken in this country. In passing I only want to mention Brazilian architecture, with its strong and simple rationalistic lines, but with strong influences of African and Japanese structure, as they can be seen in Brasília, in the new coast line of Rio de Janeiro, and in the skyline of São Paulo. But the reader might object that I have taken all my examples from what is known as the "superstructure" of civilization by marxist thinkers. Such a reader might, perhaps, be ready to admit the importance of language as a structure for these superstructures, but he might insist that the language itself is a superstructure of that fundamental reality which is the economic structure of society. As I said, I do not want to discuss my hypothesis in the present article, but I should like to mention this economic level of Brazilian reality, before passing on to the consideration of the philosophical scene of this country.

It is a fact that if the efforts of Brazilian intellectuals is to create a meaningful and dignified way of life, they have failed so far woefully as far as the economic life is concerned. A great part of Brazilian society still lives on a subsistence level, and a considerable part can be said to live outside the economic process altogether. To this part of the population, it may be said, all the new realizations of culture have no existential meaning. It can therefore be said that Brazilian culture still lives in a vacuum. But I do not think that this would be a correct way to look at what is happening here at present. The examples of realizations I have given are the expression and articulation of a society in the making and have for basis the whole of the population, although they might not attain that population. In fact, the situation as I see it is the following one: the population is the soil from which a new society is sprouting. The population in itself is not yet a society, because it has no language in which to articulate itself in the form of culture. It is still an amorphous mass of unassimilated debris of European societies in a state of decadence and misery. But the new culture is the articulation of a new society which has found a new language. And it is only a matter of time, when this new society will absorb the population. And

if ~~when~~ ^{ALLEN FLUSSER} so, this country will be the scene of a new civilisation to give new life and meaning to the West in its present crisis.

I now come to the consideration of the philosophical scene of this country. Philosophy is reflective thought, i.e. thought that directs itself in the opposite direction of general conversation. General conversation is progressive, philosophy is, by its very structure, regressive. The progress of general conversation results in culture, which is its fixed articulation. The regress of philosophy results in criticism of the very roots of that progress and therefore in a constant reformulation of that progress. In this negative sense philosophy may be said to provide a direction to progress. It is a constant incentive to the search for new values, because it constantly puts all values in doubt. It is therefore clear that authentic philosophy can only exist where there is genuine conversation, and that it is against that genuine conversation that philosophy advances. Philosophy is the negation of its own conversation. The authentic philosopher is always an outsider, in the sense of questioning all accepted values. In fact, this being outsider is his form of "engagement", because it is by saying "no" that he is engaged in his conversation.

If my analysis of the Brazilian scene is in any way correct, it must be said that there could be no Brazilian philosophy before there was a genuine Brazilian conversation. What goes by the name of "philosophy" until very recently, is nothing but academic comment on European philosophy, without any existential meaning for this country. There was no genuine Brazilian conversation, therefore there was no Brazilian reality to be criticized, and therefore no Brazilian philosophy could be made. All these positivists, bergsonists, nietzscheists, marxists, thomists and "existentialists" of the recent past have this in common: they speak of a reality which is not theirs, and therefore they are inauthentic. Of course there are human problems which are independent on a given context, and they are the fundamental problems of philosophy, like the one "why do I live? and why do I not kill myself?" or "what is all this I call my world?" or "is there or is there not a meaning to all this?" But even these last questions, (which are in fact the questions not only of philosophy, but also of religion), cannot be answered outside a context. "I am I and my circumstance" says Ortega. Of course, it is very possible that the fundamental questions cannot be answered at all, and it is even possible that they are no real questions, (having no answer). But we cannot even start to consider them outside our context. We simply do not have the very language to formulate them. That is what was happening to the Brazilian "philosophers" I have in mind, and most of them are still among the living. They cannot even start to philosophize, because they do not have the language. They are simply translators, and they translate into an artificial esperanto. But this is changing. We now have a genuine conversation. And it is up to

VILÉM FLUSSER
 us to criticize it. It is up to us to shout our "no", in order to change it. It is up to ~~us~~ ^{us} to ask our questions "Why all this?" and "why do I live?" in this genuine context. The philosophy which is thus beginning in this country is a Brazilian philosophy, and not merely a philosophy in Brazil, because it speaks the Brazilian language, and because it directs itself against that Brazilian language. That does not mean that what we are doing is not a part of the philosophical conversation of Europe. Of course it is, and we are under constant challenge of its tendencies. But it does mean that we now have something to say which the Europeans cannot say for us, because they do not have the experience of reality we have. It may be too early to mention names of philosophers to prove my contention. Anyhow, the philosophical categories, (and even the ideological categories), of Europe cannot be applied to us here without distortion. "Idealist" and "materialist", "right" and "left", have no meaning in our context. It is one of our tasks to avoid this transference of concepts to a different reality, which only distorts them. It is our task to create our own categories, and thus, maybe, enrich the philosophy of Western civilization. Because it is only by creating a genuine Brazilian philosophy, that we can contribute meaningfully to the philosophy of the world. This is our challenge.

This article intends to be a modest contribution to the establishment of such a philosophy. It tries to criticize the Brazilian conversation and to show, negatively, what it ought not to be: namely a transferred copy of Western civilization. And it tries to do so by showing the linguistic roots of that conversation. But this article has also a second intention.. It tries to show the European reader that something is going on at the borders of the West which might be meaningful to his own situation. Namely: a civilization is beginning to articulate itself, tentatively, but potentially powerfully, which is open to every influence, and alien to racial, cultural and social hatred. It is quite possible that this attempt may fail and come to nothing. But it is also possible, (just possible), that new values and new forms of life be created in this country. It is therefore worth while, for the European reader, to take an interest in it.